

TOBACCO-FREE YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

Tobacco use and subsequent addiction most frequently take root in adolescence. Preventing tobacco use among youth is critical to ensuring healthy adults because tobacco use and subsequent addiction most frequently take root in adolescence. More than 20% of all deaths in the United States are attributable to tobacco, making tobacco use the chief preventable cause of death. Teens who smoke are also more likely than nonsmokers to use alcohol, marijuana and cocaine.

TENNESSEE DATA



Every year, 14,600 Tennessee youth under 18 years of age become daily smokers. At this rate, 128,300 Tennessee youth alive today will die an early, preventable death because of a decision made as a child. Also, 488,000 youth are exposed to secondhand smoke at home and 21.7 million packs of cigarettes are bought or smoked by Tennessee youth each year. (Source: National Center for Tobacco-Free Kids, *The Toll of Tobacco in Tennessee* fact sheet, www.tobaccofreekids.org)

Currently, Tennessee is experiencing a decline in youth tobacco use; however, Tennessee continues to be above the national average in most categories.

- A substantial decline (17.5%) in cigarette use among Tennessee adolescents was noted from 1993 (74.9%) to 2005 (61.7%). However, this is still higher than the national average of 54.3%.
- White females are most likely to try smoking (64.2%) compared to African-American males (62.4%), white males (61.3%) and African-American females (54%).
- The proportion of young people younger than 13 who smoked a whole cigarette decreased significantly from 1993 (34.9%) to 2005 (18.9%).
- Current cigarette use, as defined by one or more cigarettes smoked within the past 30 days, declined among Tennessee high school students from 1993 (32%) to 2005 (26.3%). In 2005 the national average was 23%.
- The percent of high school students who reported use of smokeless tobacco products declined from 1993 (17.9%) to 2005 (14%). The national rate was 8%.
- Even though Tennessee has a tobacco-free schools law (Children's Clean Indoor Air Act of 1994), 2005 data show that 8.9% of Tennessee high school students smoked cigarettes on school property during the past 30 days.
- According to the 2000 Tennessee Youth Tobacco Survey, 23.4% of all middle school students (6th, 7th and 8th grades) currently use some kind of tobacco product compared to 15.1% nationally. Also, 16.6% of Tennessee middle school students currently smoke cigarettes compared to 11% nationally. (Tennessee middle school data are representative of all public middle schools in Tennessee except for Memphis/Shelby County.)

According to results from the 2005 Tennessee Youth Risk Behavior Survey, high school students obtained cigarettes from:

- 8.6% indicated someone else bought them cigarettes
- 8.4% at store or gas station
- 4.3% borrowed or bummed them
- 1.9% a person 18 or older
- 1.6% some other way
- 1.4% took them from store/family
- 0% vending machine



BEST PRACTICES

- **Parents** – Ninety percent of adult smokers start smoking by the age of 18. Parents can give children specific facts about the effects of tobacco on health; discuss the subject of smoking when it appears on TV, in newspapers or in advertisements in magazines; focus on peer pressure and specific ways to deal with it; let children and youth know that smoking is unacceptable behavior and model good habits by not using tobacco or trying to quit.
- **Schools** – School personnel should not allow tobacco use on school grounds. The Children's Clean Indoor Air Act of 1994, passed by the Tennessee legislature, requires school districts to institute policies banning tobacco use. Assistance is available through the Tennessee Department of Health to all Tennessee schools and colleges interested in implementing tobacco prevention programs.
- **Community** – Programs like The National Cancer Institute's ASSIST (American Stop Smoking Intervention Study) Project have demonstrated that community-based programs reduce tobacco use. Because community involvement is essential to reducing tobacco use, a portion of the tobacco control funding should be provided to local government entities, community organizations, local businesses, and other community partners.

2010 OBJECTIVES

REDUCE USE OF CHEWING TOBACCO OR SNUFF

- By 2010, reduce the proportion of high school students who used chewing tobacco or snuff on one or more of the previous 30 days to 9.1%, from the 2003 baseline of 14%.

REDUCE USE OF TOBACCO

- By 2010, reduce tobacco use among high school students (those who smoked cigarettes on one or more of the previous 30 days) to 21%, from the 2005 baseline of 26.3%.

Websites

Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids
www.tobaccofreekids.org

National Center for Tobacco-Free Kids
www.tobaccofreekids.org

Not on Tobacco: A Total Health Approach to Helping Teens Stop Smoking
American Lung Association
www.lungusa.org/school/not_teens.html

Office on Smoking and Health
www.cdc.gov/tobacco

Tennessee Department of Health
Tobacco Use Prevention and Control Program
<http://www2.tennessee.gov/health/healthpromotion/index.html#Tobacco%20Control>

